

sketch of the author's life, which takes the place occupied by Dean Bodley's preface in the original. There is nothing new, we say, and yet could anything new in any way approach to the category of woman's misery which each page of the book brings out in startling vividness,—what contrasts between woman's life in the East and West! We have heard it all before; it has rather bored us in missionary sermons and Sunday-school books, which set for our edification the Heathen India against Christian England; and, moreover, the woes of the subjugated nation have made excellent framework for some of the best fiction of the age. But it is this unpretentious little book that sticks in one's memory, haunting one at inconvenient moments, intruding unexpectedly. Put to the pleasant inconvenience of choosing among many ways the most enjoyable of spending a summer vacation, up there pops the memory of the Hindu child-wife who never knew a holiday apart from the galling rule of the tyrant mother-in-law. Or are we eyes agape drinking in the splendors of the coronation of that good King on whose dominions the sun never sets, what should start our minds harking back to something we have read of a pact 'twixt the god Mammon and the British government, whereby the British government agrees to allow to exist conditions which leave a hundred million Hindu women to groan in misery unspeakable? Or stay at home, find satisfaction in good, hard, congenial work, and when Sunday comes round to find us somewhat complacent over our well-earned rest, we go to church to have every trace of the week's care erased from our minds by a beautiful, satisfying, æsthetic worship of the loving All-Father, and there,—suddenly, mysteriously, disconcertingly,—thrusting itself in upon the memory, is the prayer of the converted Hindu woman, very epitome of bitterness and sorrow: "Dost Thou care only for man?" "Why hast Thou created us *male* and *female*?" "Save us! we cannot bear our hard lot." But her little book, so full of matter for us to ponder upon, is a mere side issue with Ramabai. She has been *doing things*. She has set herself in opposition to the powerful Hindu law, the mighty British government, the three hundred and thirty million gods of the Hindus. Her school, started nine years ago, has had three hundred and fifty pupils in all. It started with two. Many of the pupils have had complete training and gone out into the world to find happiness and independence in profitable employment. Her farm has rescued hundreds of child-widows and deserted wives, and throughout the famine fed thousands of its victims. But it is the education of the high-caste Hindu that is and has always been the ambition of this courageous woman, and though she says that one must have the power of working miracles to induce the high-caste Hindu men to receive the gospel of the regeneration of the nation through the elevation of woman, yet she believes firmly that it will come to pass, and we are fain to believe it too as in loving sympathy we wish her God-speed.

M. E. C.

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#### A FEW GOOD BOOKS.

"SOME EXPERIENCES OF AN IRISH R. M." By E. O. E. Somerville and Martin Ross. Longmans, Green & Co.

The question as to what is best to read to a patient is generally something of a problem with the nurse, but the above-mentioned volume is a solution to it if the physical disabilities of the invalid are not so great as utterly to obscure his or her sense of humor. It is the work of writers whom, as their names never

adorn any publisher's list, I must designate as comparatively unknown, and the modest title heralds merely a series of sketches of Irish life and character put together with some degree of continuity. But it is seldom one finds a book so full from cover to cover of delicious, sparkling, spontaneous humor. The adventures of the "R. M." and his wife, Philippa, form most entertaining reading—the former's first experience of fox-hunting, for instance, on his good gray steed, the "Quaker:" "We were confronted by a tall, stone-faced bank. I caught a glimpse of the young lady in a gray habit, sitting square and strong as her mare topped the bank, with Flurry and the redoubtable Flood on either hand. I followed in their wake, with a blind confidence in the Quaker and none at all in myself. He refused it. I suppose it was in token of affection and gratitude that I fell upon his neck. I discovered several facts about the Quaker. If the bank was above a certain height, he refused it irrevocably; if it accorded with his ideas, he got his fore-legs over, and ploughed through the rest of it on his stifled joints; or if a gripe made this inexpedient, he remained poised on top till the fabric crumbled under his weight. In case of walls, he butted them down with his knees or squandered them with his hind legs." Or the dance which followed. What a time, with Miss Bobbie Bennet as a partner in the Barn Dance! "For full fifteen minutes I capered and swooped beside her, larding the lean earth as I went, and replying but spasmodically to her even flow of conversation." The episode of Leigh Kelway, the "trackless obscurities of horse-dealing," where the "R. M." was "kindly invited, as to a missionary meeting, to come and bring my cheque-book;" the disclosure of Flurry and the Resident Magistrate's iniquity in connection with Trinket's offspring; the adventures of Maria, the spaniel, as set forth in "The House of Fahey,"—all these and many others are told in the most entertaining manner possible, and with delightful touches of wit. Some of the adjectives are peculiarly felicitous. "Ye lie," says the bandmaster, being a trifle *fulsome* after his luncheon; the farmer with his "long *weak* family;" and yet another instance: "Bernard stared at him (*i.e.*, the horse) in silence, not the pregnant intimidating silence of the connoisseur, but the tongue-tied muteness of helpless ignorance." The characters are often hit off in the happiest manner in a single sentence. "Flurry" Knox is described as "a fair, spare young man who looked like a stable-boy among gentlemen and a gentleman among stable-boys," and their Shute, who "had reached the happy point of possessing a mind ten years older than her age, and a face ten years younger."

The Irish atmosphere is reproduced with much fidelity, and the whole book is full of good things, and is altogether most cheerful reading.

"The Real Charlotte," by the same writers, is a totally different style of book, a genuinely old-fashioned novel of a type with which we are all more or less familiar. It is guiltless of padding and has rather less plot and more character-drawing than novels of an earlier date were wont to possess. Full of incident, the book has not a dull page, and though the end is tragic and the character of Charlotte, drawn throughout with a masterly hand, is brought home to us in all its ugliness, with a grim realism that is startling, there are still through the pages of this clever novel the flashes of wit and the same unflinching sense of the ludicrous which held and charmed us in "Some Experiences."

A. G.

